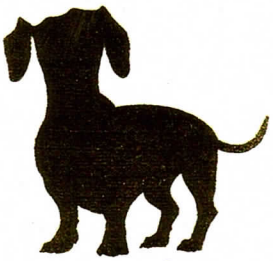
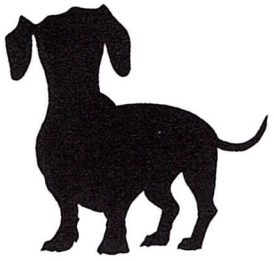
Jim Steinmeyer's

Virtual Impuzzibilities



Useful & Mysterious Demonstrations of Strangely Self-Working Conjuring

Virtual Impuzzibilities



VIRTUAL IMPUZZIBILITIES: Useful & Mysterious Demonstrations of Strangely Self-Working Conjuring
The ninth book in the Impuzzibilities Series
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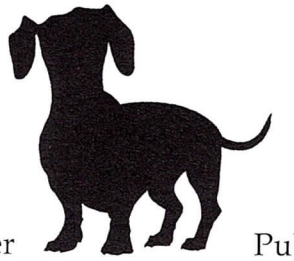

By Jim Steinmeyer Published by Hahne

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Introduction

It is the magician who often does the "heavy lifting" in the world of entertainment. All too often a minister without portfolio, an entrepreneur without respect, it falls to the magician to most efficiently thread the needle and accommodate difficult challenges, providing entertainment under difficult situations. Perhaps this is a function of the traditional role: the nature of a magician's talent is to start with three bread crumbs and give the impression that he or she has just created a seven-layer cake. But it's also a sign of magic's adaptability. As Guy Jarrett wrote in 1936, "Magic [...] is one of the arts, and one of the best entertainments for the great intelligent public. [...] A magician can give a half-hour to two-hour show for less money than any other group of entertainers can. Also, they can play to all kinds of people and other entertainers cannot. So, why are not all magicians in demand?"

Not surprisingly, with the historically calamitous events of 2020, magicians discovered a new adaptability: remote, interactive entertainment that fascinates and engages in completely unexpected and disproportionate ways. I'm proud to say that the *Impuzzibilities* series of books, published over the last eighteen years, became particularly well-thumbed and popularly adapted. "Virtual" became the name of the game, and magicians—who can make people care about impossible trivialities through the intrigue of watching impossible possibilities—have once again proved their mettle.

The recipe for *Impuzzibilities* has always included a healthy proportion of "virtual," but for this book, the ninth in the series, I've focused on this specialty. With thanks to my many friends in the world of magic who demonstrated admirable resilience during this difficult time, and hopes that when our world of entertainment returns to "first person," we may never again be rattled by these unfortunate events.

—Jim Steinmeyer
September 2020

1. Close Quarters

Four quarters are the only props needed; the spectator is taken through a simple procedure and asked to make a number of admirably free choices, eliminating coins, and yet the final result—the last quarter—is perfectly divined.

I want you to get four coins for this next trick. The best coins are four quarters, exactly one dollar's worth. Bring them back and put them on the table in front of you.

I want you to start with all of the quarters in a line on the table, and each one with Heads up, so you're showing four of George Washington's faces. In a moment, I'm going to ask you to make exactly five moves. Each move will be turning over one quarter. If you want, you can turn over all four quarters ... that's four moves ... and then one of them again. Or you can turn over one quarter five times. But the very best way to do it is to turn over five coins, one-by-one, randomly. Just let your hands do the work, as if you're not paying attention.

Make five moves. Do that now

Excellent. I want you to look at the result. If you have one coin facing a different direction than the other three, I want you to push that coin aside. We won't use it. If you have two coins facing in a different direction, take away two. If they're all facing the same direction, you won't remove any of them.

However many you have left in the row, I want you to do that again. Make five moves. Five coins get turned over. Your choice. Do that now.

Look carefully at the coins. Again, if there's one odd coin, slide it out of the line. If there are two facing a different direction, take away two. If they are all facing the same way, just keep going.

We'll do that once more. Make five moves, turning over five coins. Of course, you'll have to move a coin more than once. Do that now.

Whatever you now see, I want you to remove one coin that's showing a Head, if there is one or more showing a Head. Push that coin aside. And whatever is left in the row, which will be somewhere between no coins and four coins, cover them up with your hand.

This is where I get an impression of each step that you took. How you made your choices and how you just ended up covering up the coins with your hand.

Or maybe I should say... One coin.

I think that you have exactly one coin beneath your hand right now, and if you look closely, you'll see that the final coin is showing Tails!

2. Crime Doesn't Pay

An unusual divination, this is perfect for to a specific situation, where a group of at least three people, in one space, are able to participate in a virtual performance. Prepare this by having the group ready with three silver coins, a nickel, a dime and a quarter, and an additional twenty pennies. By having these twenty-three coins ready, they can be instructed to play the parts in an unusual crime spree. The trick is loosely adapted from a trick in Walter B. Gibson's 1927 *The Book of Secrets.*

Everyone tells you that crime doesn't pay. But I'm going to show you why. Since three of you are together, in one spot I want you to play the part of a crime gang. You're going to pretend that you've just made headlines with a crime spree, and now you're in your hideout, trying to decide how to divide up the loot.

I told you to have everything ready. So, you have three pieces of silver on the table. Those represent the three pieces of rare silver jewelry that were in the safe. For our example here, I had you bring three silver coins, a nickel, a dime, and a quarter. You also managed to escape with a handful of cash. And to represent that, I had you bring exactly twenty pennies, too.

I know what you're thinking. A nickel, a dime, a quarter and twenty pennies. That's 60 cents, and it's not much of a crime spree. We have to use our imaginations.

Here's how you're going to divide up the loot. I want one of you to volunteer to be first. Which one is it going to be?

A spectator identifies himself or herself. Let's say that it's Ann. On the cue sheet that follows, write down this name as Person 1, so you'll remember it.

CUE CARD FOR "Crime Doesn't Pay"

Person 1:_____ 2:_____ 3:_____

1¢ bribe: Person 1 has nickel plus 5¢; 2 has quarter plus 14¢; 3 has just dime.
3¢ bribe: Person 1 has quarter plus 7¢; 2 has nickel plus 10¢; 3 has just dime.
5¢ bribe: Person 1 has dime plus 1¢; 2 has quarter plus 14¢; 3 has just nickel.
9¢ bribe: Person 1 has dime plus 1¢; 2 has nickel plus 10¢; 3 has just quarter.
11¢ bribe: Person 1 has quarter plus 7¢; 2 has dime plus 2¢; 3 has just nickel.
13¢ bribe: Person 1 has nickel plus 5¢; 2 has dime plus 2¢; 3 has just quarter.

Ann, I want you to go over to the coins. Don't let me see what you're doing, and don't say what you're doing. I want you to pick up one of the silver coins and hold it in your hand. Any one of the three. You might not pick the biggest one, because, after all, sometimes it's the small pieces of jewelry that are worth the most.

Have you got one? Perfect.

I also want you to take some money, some of the pennies. Here's how you'll do it. I want you to take a penny for each number in the value of your coin. So, if you picked the the quarter, you'll take seven pennies, for the digits 2 and the 5. That totals 7. If you picked the dime, you'd take one penny, for the digits 1 and the 0. For the nickel, you'd take five pennies, because it's just a 5.

And put those pennies in your hand with the other coin. Hold all of them tightly.

Good. Who's the second criminal?

Let's say that it's Bill. Similarly, you write down Bill's name as Person 2.

Bill, I want you to go over to the coins. Don't tell me what silver you're going to pick. Take one of the remaining silver coins in your hand. And now, because there is still plenty of cash left, this crook takes his share, his total of the digits, but he's greedy, so he takes twice as much. If you took the quarter, you'd take 7, and another 7. Fourteen. If it's the dime, take 1, and another 1. If you picked the nickel, you'd take 5, and then another 5, to total 10. Hold all those pennies in your hand as well. Of course, we still have one more crook. Who is that?

Let's say that's Carol, and you write down her name, Person 3.

Carol, you get the silver coin that's left over. Put that in your hand. I don't know how many pennies are still there, but Carol is a very clever criminal, who knows that it's nice to have a little extra money for bribes. So Carol doesn't take any extra money. You only have one silver coin in your hand. Don't tell me what it is.

You're all probably thinking, "Bribes? Who do we have to bribe?" But just as you're asking that question, you

hear a knock on the door. Who's there? It's me. I'm the police inspector. I'm investigating the missing jewelry and the missing money. Carol decides to offer me a bribe. How much money is left? How many pennies are there that haven't been taken?

You'll hear a number somewhere between one and 13. Depending on the response, the cue sheet will now tell you exactly how the selections were made by each of the three spectators.

Too bad crime didn't pay ... me! Since you can't offer me a good bribe, I guess I'll just have to solve this case, right now. I think I know exactly who stole which items....

Following the cue card, you make the revelations. These should be presented with the dramatic tone of detective, and you may choose to reveal them out of order, building to Person 1.

3. Welcome Change

A liberal interpretation of The Three Heaps, from Martin Gardner's *Mathematics, Magic and Mystery,* provides this very surprising interactive trick.

I am going to do a trick with you. Actually, you're going to do the trick, and I'll just take credit for it, which is the traditional formula for a lot of famous magicians. We'll need a little apparatus, so I'd like you to get a handful of change. Any coins that you want, but get at least fifteen, and if you want, get a number closer to forty or fifty. When you have them, let me know.

Perfect. Let's start with three piles of coins on the table in front of you, with the same number of coins in each pile. Just arrange a row of piles. One on your left, one in the center, one on the right. You can use as many coins as you

wish, but let's have at least five coins in pile. If you want, you can have as many as fifteen in each pile. Your choice. Don't tell me how many you're using. Just make sure that each pile has the same number.

Have you got that? If you have any coins left over, just push them aside, or put them in your pocket.

Right now the piles are all the same, so I'm going to give you instructions to mix them up, depending on your choices. I want you to first take four coins from the pile on your right, and put them in the center pile. Then take four coins from the pile on your left. Put those in the center, too.

Right now, you have a center pile with the most coins in it.

So we'll keep mixing them up. Count the coins in either pile, on the right or left. Don't tell me the number, just remember it. And now, I want you to remove that number of coins from the center pile. Once you have the coins in your hand, I want you to put all those coins—the ones you've just taken out—into the pile on the left, or the pile on the right. Your choice. Put them all in one of the other piles.

So now you've done it. You've got three different piles, with three different numbers of coins. I can't know how many you have, because I don't even know how many you started with.

So I want you to hold your hand above the piles, and now, bring your hand down on top of the pile with the fewest coins in it. Have you done that? Now, wherever you landed, I want you to move your hand, left or right, to the closest pile that's next to it. Go ahead and move your hand to the nearest pile in the row.

Keep your hand right there. Even though these choices have been yours, I can tell how many coins are beneath your hand, right now. You probably don't know how many coins are there, but I can tell... There are exactly... Twelve. Go ahead and count the coins in that pile. It's an even dozen.

In order to complete the trick with a little applause, I'll take credit for knowing that. And I'll be happy to accept any applause you're willing to offer!

4. Zeitgeist

Here the same principle is used in a fanciful presentation, ideally-suited to a virtual performance for one person—or even better, a simultaneous performance with any number of people. Everyone works together to perform the trick on their own tabletop, starting with their own choices, and is surprised to get the same results

Like a lot of magicians, I became interested in magic when I was just a kid. I found this page from my old notebook. I don't remember performing it, but I put a star at the top of the page, so it must have been a good trick. You see what I wrote here? "If you close your eyes and concentrate on the number, the trick will always work." That doesn't sound like a trick. That sounds like real magic, like casting a spell. So I thought all of us could try it.

I want you to take a deck of cards and deal three piles of cards, face-down, on the table. One on the left, one in the middle, one on the right. Each pile has to have the same number of cards in it. You can use any number of cards, from four cards to, let's say, fifteen cards. Your choice. Deal those three piles right now, your choice how many cards.

Perfect. You can put the rest of the cards aside. Those are the only cards we'll use.

According to my notes, this trick casts a spell, to make something specific happen. So even though you've just chosen your own numbers, I'm going to need another number, a small number, our goal for the spell.

Designating one spectator, you ask her name.

Emma, I want you to think of a number between one and ten. It's completely your choice. A favorite number, or maybe a number that just popped into your head. What number are you thinking of?

She says, for example, five.

Okay. All of us are going to work together, so that we make this spell happen for Emma. I want to point out that I asked for her number after you've already made your choices and dealt your piles, so there's no way I can change what happens. That's the amazing part.

Let me read from my old notes. I want everyone to do this together.

Pick up the pile of cards on the left. Deal three cards off that pile, onto the pile in the middle.

Put those cards down again, on the left.

Now pick up the pile on the right. Deal three cards off that pile, onto the pile in the middle.

Put those cards down again.

Listen closely. Pick up the pile on the left. Count the cards in it, and remember that number. Put the pile down.

Pick up the pile in the middle. Deal off that number of cards, the number from the left pile, and deal them on top of the pile on the right.

Put the middle pile down again.

So now, if you check, the pile on your right will be the largest pile of cards.

We're getting to the end. It says, take three cards from the middle pile, and put them on the pile on the left. And finally, take one more card from the middle pile, and put it on the pile on the right.

And now I wrote, "The end."

It's strange, isn't it? Emma, what number did you say? Five? This is where we all close our eyes for a second and concentrate on that number.... That's it`! I know you all started with different numbers, but I want everyone to now pick up your pile of cards in the middle, and count the number of cards in that pile.

You did it, didn't you? Five cards? You cast the spell for Emma and ended up with five cards.

Write out a notebook page, which contains instructions for the trick. Following the instructions above,

three cards from each pile are put on the center, and then the number of cards from the left pile are removed from the center pile. At that point, there will be exactly nine cards in the center pile. You then tell everyone to have cards removed from the center pile: the number you use is 9 minus the spectator's number. This will leave everyone with the spectator's number in the center pile.

In the above example, the spectator picks five. You instruct that four cards are removed from the center pile (so five cards remain). If the spectator picks nine, you omit this step (so nine remain). Pretending that these final instructions have also been written on the paper, the spell seems predetermined.

5. Subversive Math

An old number trick, totaling selected cards by using the remaining cards, works well in an interactive setting, where the spectator's procedure is safely out of sight, and the performer's cues can be readily available, yet remain hidden. The presentation offers a crazy example of coincidence.

I actually think that there are a lot of coincidences, happening every minute of every day. We just don't understand them. Let me show you a weird coincidence that I discovered. I'm going to ask you to use a deck of cards, and I want you to select three cards. I'm going to tell you how those add up, simple math... But here's the coincidence. Those cards will be the same as the extra cards in the deck, minus the name of your oldest friend, minus the name of my best friend, plus your favorite time of the year. Don't ask how I found this; it's a weird coincidence. But I guess if I tell you it'll happen, it's not really a coincidence, is it?

Let's try it. Take a deck of cards. Remove the jokers and any extra cards. We need exactly 52 cards. I want you to do this on the table, so that I can't see any of the cards you're selecting. That's very important. Take three cards out of the deck. Any three, but make sure that they are all different values. Put them face-up on the table in front of you.

Remember, an Ace counts for one, a Jack is eleven, a Queen is twelve, a King is thirteen, like in most games. Hold the rest of the deck face-down in your hands. In front of each card, I want you to deal a pile of cards. The number of the cards in that pile will bring the value of that card to fifteen. So, if you're looking at a seven, you'd deal, "Eight, nine, ten, eleven..." up to fifteen. It would be eight cards. If you're looking at a King, you'd deal, "Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen." Do that now. Make each pile total fifteen, but don't let me hear how many cards you're dealing.

Good. Keep the rest of the cards in your hand. My strange little coincidence will tell me the total of the three cards you picked. So, remember what I said. First, count the extra cards in your hand. Go ahead and count them out loud, and tell me how many you're still holding.

The spectator will give you a number between ten and forty. We'll say, for example, it's twenty-four.

Perfect. Now, I want you to subtract the name of your oldest friend. Who is that?

The spectator says, for example, Valerie. You spell it, counting the letters. Valerie has seven letters. The name needs must be from two to eight letters. (If the name is longer than eight letters, ask for a shorter version, a nickname.)

Great. That's twenty-four minus seven. Seventeen. My best friend is Joe. So let's subtract that, J-O-E, three letters, and we get fourteen.

The name of your best friend that will be a name between two and eight letters, and you choose the name so that the two names total ten. You can use the following chart to find the name.

2—AL
3—JOE
4—ALAN
5—AIDAN
6—JOHNNY
7—ANTHONY
8—JONATHAN

Finally, we add in your favorite season on the year. We'll add those letters. What's your favorite season?

The spectator says, for example, "Spring." (If the spectator says, for example, "Christmas," explain that's in the Winter.)

S-P-R-I-N-G. That's six letters. I'll add six letters to fourteen, and get twenty. Twenty is the total. Let's see how the coincidence worked. Tell me now, for the first time, what were the original three cards you selected, on the table?

The spectator says, for example, a nine, a three, and an eight.

Perfect. I told you that it would work. Those total twenty!

The basic principle is that the number of the remaining cards, in the spectator's hand, will be exactly four more than the mathematical total of the three cards first dealt.

The number choices are explained as follows. The two names together will always subtract a total of ten from the number. The four seasons, "Spring," "Summer," "Autumn," and "Winter" all spell with six letters, so adding six will give you a final sum four less than the count of the original cards.

The choices sound crazy, as if they can't be responsible for the solution, but they actually are.

6. Tour de Force

This useful procedure is an effective force of one of ten cards, expecially for a hands-off performance. Here's it's presented as an open prediction.

This is one of those tricks where you randomly arrive at a number between one and ten, and I make a guess about what you're thinking. It doesn't sound very interesting when I say it that way. But I'm going to make it more challenging; I'll make my guess before we even begin. I'm going to say that you'll pick a card with nine spots on it, and arrange that card so that it's on the bottom, in a packet of cards. In fact, I think that you have a strange tendency to make various choices, and still end up with that result.

Now that I've explained, here's how we'll try this experiment. I'd like you to take a pack of cards, and remove ten cards from it. Take an ace, a two, a three... And just keep going until you have the ace through ten. Don't worry about suits. We're just going to use numbers.

Put them in order face-up, with the ace, face-up, on the top, and the ten on the bottom of the packet.

Hold the packet of cards face-up in your hands, so you can see the ace. I want you to think of any small number, like 1 through 5. I'm doing that so that you won't have a tendency to think of nine, since I've already told you you might pick that number. Do you have a number? One through five? Don't tell me what it is. I want you to shift that number of cards from the top of the packet to the bottom. So, if you're thinking of two, you'd shift one card to the bottom, and then a second card to the bottom. Do that now, with your own number.

Of course, I don't know how you've shifted the cards. But we're going to eliminate some cards, to make this easier. Keep them face-up. Take the top two face-up cards, and put them aside. We won't use them. And now, turn the whole

packet face-down. I want you to take the top two face-down cards, from the top of the packet, and put those aside, too.

Keep the packet face-down in your hands. Now that some cards have been removed, I want you to use your secret number, the same number you used before, and shift that number of cards from the top of the packet to the bottom of the packet. Do that now.

Hold the packet in your hands. Since I don't know how many cards you shifted, I can't know the cards that were discarded, or the cards that ended up in the packet. But remember what I told you. Even though you make free choices, you have a tendency to end up with the nine, and you have a tendency to put that card on the bottom of the packet.

So now... What's on the bottom? Turn the whole packet face-up and take a look.

I told you that you'd pick the nine. There it is. The nine.

7. The Lie That Tells the Truth

Enjoying the popularity of the efficient Nine Card Problem, published in the first *Impuzzibilities* book, a number of magicians developed variations. Several focused on the spectator's ability to lie or tell the truth as they spelled the name of their card.

The "lie or tell the truth" theme works perfectly as a presentation for The Full Deck Problem (also from *Impuzzibilities*), and performed as a virtual effect through media, for someone holding cards. It's also incredible for others to watch: a borrowed, shuffled deck, handled remotely, can tell the magician the name of a mentally selected card.

I'll need you to get a deck of cards, so that you can perform this trick while I tell you about it. Go ahead and do that now. I want you to take the deck and shuffle it, so the cards are really mixed. I'm going to ask you to notice that I'm not going to ask you about any of the cards in the deck, or their positions, until we get to the very end of the trick, after you've made your choices. In other words, you're making these decisions by yourself, and you're not giving me any clues.

Hold the deck face-down in your hand, ready for dealing. I want you to turn over the top card of the deck and remember it. That's the card that you randomly shuffled there. I can't have any idea what card you've selected.

Turn the card face-down again, on the top of the deck. But whatever you do, don't forget the name of that card, because if you do... well, whatever happens, it's no fun to get to the end and forget where we were going.

I want you to deal cards off the top, into a face-down pile on the table, but I'm going to have you do it in a specific way. I want you to think of the value of the card, Ace through King. And I'm going to ask you to spell that value, Ace through King, by dealing one card face-down for each letter. But there's a twist.

Before you do it, you may wish to confuse me by lying about the name of your card. In other words, you may be thinking of a Four, but instead, you spell Seven, S-E-V-E-N. Don't tell me what you're thinking. And feel free to be dishonest. But deal the value of the card down, one-card-at-a-time, into a pile on the table.

Perfect. Of course, I can't tell if you were honest or dishonest. Take the rest of the deck, in your hands, and drop them on top of that pile. Now pick up the whole deck again, so you are holding all the cards.

Remember that the middle name of every card is "of." So, I want you to do that again. Deal two cards down on the table in a pile, spelling O-F. And then, when you've done that, drop the rest of the cards on top. Of course, there's nothing to lie about if you're spelling "of."

Pick up the whole deck again, and hold it in your hands. I'm going to ask you to turn the whole deck over, so it's face-up in your hands. This time, you'll deal them in a pile face-up. I want you to spell the suit. Either Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, or Spades. But feel free to lie again. You can spell a different suit, if you'd like.

Deal those cards in a pile, then drop the rest of the deck, all face-up, on top of them.

Pick the deck and turn it face-down again. I'm going to ask you to make one more mental selection. I want you to spell the color of the card. You can spell red or black, R-E-D, or B-L-A-C-K, depending on your choice.

Or, of course, you can actually lie about it, and spell the other color.

So deal those down, face-down, in a pile.

When you're done, take the rest of the deck, face-down, and drop it on top. Pick up all the cards again.

Of course, I don't know how you mixed up the cards. I don't have any idea if you were telling the truth, or making things up, or a little of each. So I can't know which card you were thinking about, or where it is.

So, let's see if it's near the top or the bottom of the deck.

Turn the deck face-up. I want you to deal cards, from the face, into a pile on the table. As you deal each card, tell me the name of it. Don't give me any clues as you deal. Just name off each card.

As the spectator reads off the names, the third card named will be the original selected card. Note this card. Let him or her deal about five or six cards, then tell the spectator:

Stop. Yes. I can tell that it's near the bottom of the deck. I'm sure that you just saw it, and you've dealt past the card. You did a good job, mixing the cards according to your whims, but it's always hard to cover up the truth. I get the impression that you've been thinking of the ...

Here you name the card.

8. Red-Scarlet

Oil and Water, the basic theme, takes a virtual twist. The magician demonstrates how to make a perfect mixture of red and black cards with nothing but random choices.

I want to show you how to make a perfect mixture—how people, and ideas, and even opposites can come together magically to make something amazing. We're going to do it with nothing more than intuition. Well, actually, we'll also use a few playing cards. So, I need you to get a deck of cards. Do that now.

I want you to take four red cards out of the deck, four cards with red spots on them. Then take out four black cards. Those are our basic ingredients, black and red. Put the rest of the deck aside.

Now separate the red and black cards, so that the red cards are together, side-by side, and the black cards are side-by-side. Four red, four black in the packet. You can put the red cards on top, or the black cards on top. Once you've done that, just turn the packet of eight cards face-down. I want you to cut them and complete the cut, mixing them up. Be careful. You may end up just cutting off one or two cards, but be sure that you actually cut them and complete the cut.

Do that again. Cut them and complete the cut. I'm hoping that you've lost track of them, so you don't have any idea what card is on top.

Deal that card, the top card, onto the table. Don't look at the card; don't ruin the surprise. Just deal it down. Hold all the rest of the cards in your hand.

Now, I know that we separated the colors, but I'm going to match each red card with a black card, without looking. I have to imagine what you picked, and find a match. I'll use the words, "red" and "black" and pick one word, using just my intuition. ... I'll pick "red." Since you have the cards, I want you to spell the word, "R-E-D," by moving cards,

one at a time, from the top of the packet in your hand to the bottom. In other words, shift three cards, top to bottom... R-E-D. Do that now.

Stop right there. You've just ended up with new card on the top of the packet. That will be my choice. Don't look at it. Just deal it, face-down, on top of the card that's already on the table.

Well done. Those were the first two cards. Let's do that again.

Cut the cards and complete the cut. Hold them tightly in your hand. Deal the first card, the card you've just cut to, on top of the other cards on the table. Now I have to decide on my card picking between two opposites. This time, I'm going to use the words, "crimson" and "ebony colored." Actually, I'll let you make the decision for me. Use your intuition. Which appeals to you, "crimson," or "ebony colored"?

Whichever one the spectator chooses, instruct the spectator to spell the word, C-R-I-M-S-O-N or E-B-O-N-Y-C-O-L-O-R-E-D (spelling just the letters, not the space). *I'll spell it, you move the one card for each letter, top to bottom.*

Okay. You've gotten to a different card. Take the card that's now on the top of the packet in your hand, and deal it face-down on top of the other cards.

One more time. Cut the cards and complete the cut. There aren't too many left. Deal the top card face-down, on top of the other cards. And I want you to make one more choice for me. This time we're going to decide between "scarlet" or "coal." Which word do you want?

Whichever one the spectator chooses, instruct the spectator to spell the word, S-C-A-R-L-E-T, or C-O-A-L, by shifting cards from the top to the bottom. *Move them as I spell the word.*

Perfect. That means that there's a card for me on the top. Deal that card face-down on top of the other cards. You now have exactly two cards left in your hand. Don't mix them. Just drop them, together, on top of the cards on the

table. That means that you don't have any cards left in your hand; they're all in a pile on the table. You'll notice that we've re-arranged them, based on your random choices. Let's see if we got a perfect mix.

Pick up the top two cards on the pile. Just cards one and two. Turn them face up. You'll see a perfect mix. One red card and one black card. Put those down. Now pick up the next two cards and take a look. Red and black. Look at the next two cards. Red and black. And, of course, that leaves the last two cards on the table. Red and black. A perfect mix.

9. French Dressing

Surprisingly visual, this oil and water effect takes place in the spectator's hands as the magician narrates. After demonstrating how cards can be dealt in groups and remain unmixed, the ending provides an especially strong impact.

There's a really profound scientific mystery, called Chaos Theory. It's all about how things get mixed up. It's mysterious because we don't usually think about how things get mixed up. If you shake a bottle of salad dressing, the oil mixes with the vinegar. It doesn't matter if you shake it up or down, or right and left. No one ever thinks that shaking it in a circle makes the oil and the vinegar separate, instead of mixing.

I'll show you why this is so mysterious. I want you to get a deck of cards, and I'll have you perform a little oil and vinegar trick. Just follow my instructions, and do it exactly the way I'm telling you.

(Part One) *I want you to take six cards out of the deck. Take out three black spot cards, and three red spot cards. Don't take any royal cards. Just cards with numbers and different suits.*

The reason I said three red and three black is that those cards will be our oil and vinegar.

Put the rest of the deck aside. We don't need it. Take the six cards in a fan, and arrange them so they alternate. A black one, a red one, a black one, a red one... Do that with all six. You'll notice that if you cut that packet of cards anywhere, and complete the cut... go ahead and do that now, cut and complete the cut... if you look at the cards again, there might be a different red or black card on the face, but they are still mixed the same way, alternating red and black.

I'm going to show you a different way to mix them.

Hold the cards face-down in your hands, in a packet. I want you to deal four cards off the top, one at a time, and deal them into a pile on the table. One, two, three, four. Then take the cards that are still in your hand and drop them on top.

Pick them all up again. Do that one more time, but this time, just deal two cards down. One, two. And drop the rest of the cards on top.

Pick them up in your hands. You might wonder how you mixed up the cards. Go ahead and turn them over and spread them out. You'll see, they're still alternating. As long as you deal pairs like that, you're just shifting the cards around, but you're not changing the pattern. Red, black, red, black.

I'll show you one more time. Hold the cards face-up this time. I want you to deal down three cards, in a pile, face-up. One, two, three. You can see the cards go by you. Red, black... And now, take the rest of the packet and drop it on top. Pick them all up again and take a look. You'll see that the cards are still in order, still alternating colors. It doesn't really matter how you mix them up, so long as you keep mixing them.

(Part Two) *We'll do a very fancy mix, face-up and face-down. Hold the packet in your hand so that the cards are facing up. Deal four cards down in a pile. Drop the rest on top, and pick them all up again.*

Square them up. Keep them face-up. This time, deal three. Drop the rest on top, and pick them up.

Now pick up the packet and turn the cards face-down.

Deal two cards. Drop the rest on top. Pick them up.

Deal one card. And drop all the rest of the cards on top.

Maybe I mixed you up that time, because we did it face-up and face-down. Go ahead, turn over the cards and have a look at what happened. You'll see that they're still perfectly mixed. Red, black, red, black....

(Part Three) *So now, let's add the most important step in the formula. Nothing! Make sure that the cards are still alternating, and then just square them up in your hand, face-up.*

Follow my instructions one more time. Deal four face-up on the table. Drop the rest on top.

Pick up the packet and turn it face-down in your hands.

Deal three face-down in a pile. Drop the rest on top.

Pick up the packet and turn it face-up in your hands.

Deal two on the table. Drop the rest on top.

Pick up the packet and turn it face-down in your hands.

Deal one card, and drop the rest on top.

Now... very important... Leave the cards on the table and take your hands away. You've just been watching all the cards go by again: red, black, red, black. I want you to leave them there on the table for one... two... three seconds.

Perfect. Because it doesn't matter how you mix them, as long as you keep mixing them. But as soon as you leave the cards alone, they make their own arrangement. Just like oil and vinegar.

Pick up the cards and turn them over. Take a look! How are they mixed?

The spectator will now discover that the red and black cards have separated.

10. For Your Next Trick

Balducci's efficient "Cut Deeper" force becomes the linchpin of this effective virtual routine. The spectator does the trick for the magician, and the presentation is well-suited to a video medium or virtual meeting platform. If other spectators watch the procedure, they are equally amazed by the one spectator's results.

This is where I was going to perform a fantastic new card trick for you. You just think of a card. I pick three cards out of the deck, and then I eliminate them, one by one, until I have one choice left. The odds are one in fifty-two, but somehow, I manage to find your card. I actually think that I'm the only person in the world who can do this particular trick.

But since I never get to see it, I thought that, tonight, you could perform it for me. Here's how it's going to work. You're going to get a deck of cards. You'll follow my instructions. And in a few minutes, we'll know for sure whether I'm the only person in the world who can perform this card trick.

Start by taking the cards and shuffling them. You only need to shuffle them once, at the beginning of the trick, so be sure that you do a good job.

I want you to hold the cards up to the camera, so I can see them. I want you to spread them out a little bit, so that I can see different values. I'm going to think of one.

You're going to "think" of the second card from the top of the pack. Depending on how efficiently the spectator spreads the cards, you may need to make the directions specific:

Spread out some cards near the top. Good. And now, spread some cards near the middle. And now, show me some

near the bottom. Perfect. Square up the cards and hold the in your hands, face-down.

Once you've noted the second card from the top, you'll need to formalize the prediction. You can do it by picking the same card out of deck in your hands and placing it prominently in view. Or pick up a piece of paper and write the name of the card boldly, out of sight of the camera. Then fold the prediction and hold it up through the rest of the routine.

In a little while, I'm going to tell you the name of the card. I'll write it down now, so I don't forget. Remember, this piece of paper is going to remain in your sight!

I want you to hold the cards down, near the table, so I can't see them. Don't give me any clues, or show me any cards. Perfect. Start by holding the cards, face-down, and cut off a small packet of cards, about a third of the deck.

Have you done that? Take that packet, turn it upside-down, and put it on top of the deck. Of course, now you have a deck with face-up and face-down cards.

Now I want you to cut another packet off, but this time, cut a bigger packet, about two-thirds of the deck off the top. Turn all those cards over, too, and put them back on top.

Again, face-up and face-down cards. But you've just picked some particular cards, and a particular location, near the middle of the deck. Go ahead and spread through the face-up cards, until you get to the first face-down card. When you get there, I want you to deal the first three face-down cards into a pile on the table in front of you.

The nature of this selection will place the magician's card as the middle card of these three.

Put the rest of the deck aside. We're only going to use those three cards, from the deck. Pick up the packet and hold them, face-down, in your hands. I want you to slide off the top card, face-down, and put it down. We won't use that.

Hold the other two cards tightly. I want you to think of a small number, from one to three. Don't tell me the number. Don't show me any of the cards in your hand. In fact, don't even look at them yourself.

I want you to count down to your number, one-by-one, and as you count, transfer a card from the top of the packet to the bottom, shifting that number of cards. Go ahead and do that now.

Just to make sure none of us can keep track, I'd like you to do that again. Count down to your number, transferring one card from top to bottom. Once more, do it for your number of cards.

Perfect. Hold the packet tightly in your hands. This time, I'd like you to slide out the bottom card and toss it down. We won't use that one, either.

You've done an excellent job of making choices. You're now holding one last card in your hands.

If I was doing this trick for you, you'd have to admit, it could be a miracle right now. I just thought of a card. You picked out three cards, purely by accident. You eliminated one card, purely by chance. You eliminated a second card, purely by dumb luck.

I want you to take the card in your hand and hold it up. Let me see which one, of 52, you picked out.

Here's the strange part. Here's the card I was thinking of, through this entire trick....

You unfold the paper, showing the name of the card. It's the same card.

And now, as a professional courtesy, one magician to another, please, please... Don't tell anyone how you did that!

11. Hoodwinked

This neat interpretation of the 21 Card Trick borrows elements from a Garcia & Schlindler trick in *Magic with Cards*. Here it is tuned to an interactive performance. The spectator does it all, without showing the performer any playing cards—except for one moment, when a few random cards become part

of the spectator's deception.

Although magicians have a reputation for being dishonest, I consider myself one of the most honest people I know. Honestly! I can tell you, from my experience, magicians don't try to deceive you. They try to make you deceive yourself. That's a big difference. All you need is one tiny deception, in the middle of the truth, and that's how you get hoodwinked. I'll show you what I mean by performing a card trick for you. Because we're going to do this remotely—with you handling the cards and making all the choices—I'm going to ask you to be completely honest through this process. And then, for one brief moment, I'm going to ask you to be dishonest.

So take the deck of cards and remove any jokers or advertising cards. Give them a good shuffle. I'm going to ask you to keep the cards down, out of the view of the camera, as you look at them and mix them. That way I have no way of guessing what cards you're looking at.

Start by cutting the deck in half, and put the halves side-by-side. You don't have to cut it perfectly in half, but you can adjust the halves so that they feel pretty equal. I want to give you enough cards. Pick up either half and put it aside, or put it back in the box. We're only going to use half the deck.

I want you to take those cards, and cut them into four equal piles. Again, they don't need to be perfect, but you can equalize them, moving cards around, so they feel pretty equal.

Pick up one of those four piles, fan them towards you, and think of any card in that pile. Don't pull it out or move it. But be sure you remember it. Square up that pile and hold it in your hand, face-down. Now put the three other piles on top of that pile.

You're holding half the deck in your hand again, right? I want you to deal down three cards, from the top into a pile. And then, next to them, another three cards, and then another. All together, deal out four piles of three cards each. Now go back and deal two cards on the top of each pile. And do that again, two cards on the top of each pile, if you can.

And then deal any cards left over.

Since you've mixed them up, I want you to find out which pile has your card. Turn all four piles face-up. And go ahead and look through them. Don't change the order, just spread out the cards so you know which pile has your card. Put that pile in your hand, face-up. Drop the other three piles on top of that pile.

Perfect. This time, keep the cards face-up. Deal out four piles. This time, deal them one at a time, as if you were dealing four hands of cards. Deal right across in four rows. Then another card on top of first four cards, and keep going until you've dealt all the cards.

Maybe you've noticed which pile has your card in it. If you need to, you can pick up the piles and spread them out to see where your card is. Don't give me any clues where it is.

The spectator's card will actually be seen on the top of one face-up pile, but you don't reveal this.

Since you're doing it all, you have to say the dishonest part, as well. You'll notice that I haven't seen any of the cards. So I want you to pick up a different pile, one that doesn't have your card in it, and hold it up, facing me. Spread them out, like a fan of cards, showing them to the camera. Let me get a good look at them. I want you to repeat after me. "This pile of cards...."

The spectator repeats what you say. *"Has my card somewhere inside of it. I promise!"*

As the spectator says this, note the back card (the top card, closest to the spectator) of the pile that is being spread in front of the camera, and remember this card.

Square up that pile, and drop it on top of the pile that has your card. Then drop the other two piles on top, as well.

Pick up all the cards. Give them a cut and complete the cut. If you want, you can cut them again.

Because the spectator's card was on the face of the packet, the card you noted is now a key card, just above the spectator's card.

Hold the cards face-up, and deal through them, one at a time, naming each card as it's dealt. Don't give me any clues. Remember, this is the first time I'm hearing the cards you've been using.

Stop the spectator when you hear the card after your key card. That's the chosen card.

12. The Deck That Knows

Walter B. Gibson suggested this variation on the number cards formula in his *The Book of Secrets.* Use four strips of cards, each about 13 inches long, with the cards overlapping in so that the indexes show. These strips can be glued in place on cardboard, using full-sized cards. Notice how they are arranged. The cards are specifically grouped, with the royal cards on the face of each strip.

I've been working on a new design for a deck of cards. They're much easier to handle. No mess if you drop them on the floor. Simple to shuffle. I know what you're thinking. That's just four, long thin cards. Actually, if you look closely, all the cards are there. And they're perfect for performing magic.

I want you to think of any card. Do that now. Now, look at these strips, carefully, and tell me if you see any cards with the same value of your card. So, if you're thinking of an Ace, you'd just tell me if you see any Aces. It might be your ace, or different Aces. Don't give me any clues. Don't tell me how many you see.

I'll hold them up, like this. You look them over carefully and just say, yes, I see my value. Or no, there aren't any matching values there.

Here the spectator tells you, yes or no, with each strip of cards. He may see his value on one, two, three, or four strips. Each strip has a key, which is represented by the top card in the strip. These keys

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are Ace (one), Two, Three, and Seven. If the spectator tells you that he sees his value on (for example) two strips, glance at the values of these strips and add them. So, if the two values are Seven and One, then the spectator is thinking of an Eight. If he sees his card on three strips, 7, 3 and 2, that total 12, he's thinking of the Queen. Wait before revealing this. You are now going to discover the suit of the card.

You may have noticed that I put all of the royal cards, the Jack, the Queen and the King, at the fronts of the packets. This time, I want you to look at just the royal cards, and tell me if you see any royal cards that share the suit of your card. You know, Clubs, Hearts, Diamonds, or Spades. Don't tell me the suit. Don't give me any other clues. Just say if there's a Jack, Queen, or King with the same suit.

Holding up the strips again, one-by-one, make sure that the front three cards are clearly displayed to the camera. The spectator will identify three strips with his suit, and one strip that doesn't have his suit. Glance at the key card, the top card, on this strip (the strip where he didn't see his suit). The suit of that card will tell you the suit of the selected card.

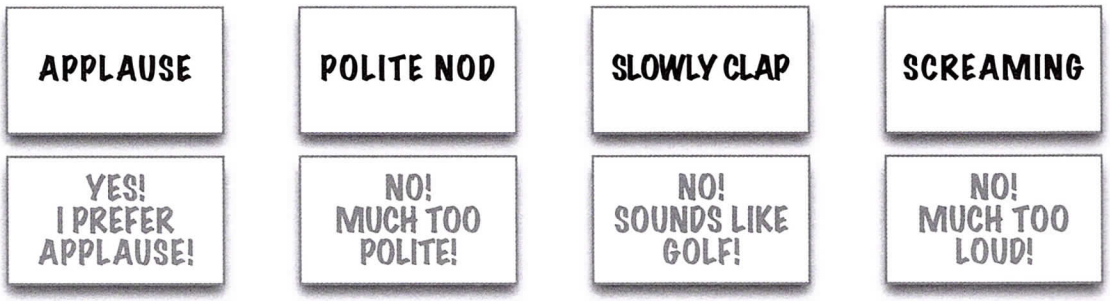
You can now simply reveal the selection, or use that information for a more elaborate revelation.

13. Virtual Applause

Useful in a virtual performance, the performer shows four pieces of cardboard, each about 8 1/2 by 11 inches. On them are the words, "Applause," "Polite Nod," "Slowly Clap," and "Screaming," in black marker. The cards have been prepared in the following way: the Applause card has the words, "Yes!

I Prefer Applause!" on the back, in red marker. The other three have, versions of "No!" on the back, written in red and shown here.

As you're displaying the cards, you don't show these extra words on the back.



The hardest part of a virtual show is the lack of actual applause or laughter. I can tell you, a performer gets addicted to those sounds. It's different with video. The other night, I was performing, and I saw someone waving a piece of cardboard in the air, like this. When I asked him what he was doing, I noticed that the cardboard said, "Screaming." He had a whole range of reactions for a virtual show. Like this. "Applause," "Polite Nod," "Slowly Clap," "Screaming." So I thought I'd try a bit of mind reading with his cue cards. I prefer one of these more than the others. Instead of just telling you, we'll eliminate them, one-by-one, until just one is left.

After showing the faces, get the "Applause" card on the back of the stack, with the different words facing the spectators. Calling on a spectator to make a choice, say:

I want you to make a free choice. Don't try to guess which one is best. Try to make it a perfectly random choice.

If the spectator names the "Applause" card, the effect is ideal. Show the card on the back and say:

Let's eliminate the rest of them, one-by-one. Here's "Polite Nod." Let's all try a polite nod. No, "much too polite."

You toss that card down. Repeat this with other two cards, encouraging the reaction, then showing the messages on the back. Finally, you'll end up with the "Applause" card. Encourage applause, then turn over the card, showing the back.

I told you, one will be left at the end. You've probably figured out by now that I prefer applause, and now I hope that I'll be able to earn a little applause, at least in your imaginations.

If the spectator picks any of the other three cards, instead of "Applause," slide that card out and put it on the face of the packet, with the "Applause" card still on the back.

I'm going to use your choice to eliminate a card. I'll spell it.

Here you spell the choice, either "P-O-L-I-T-E-N-O-D," or "S-L-O-W-L-Y-C-L-A-P," or "S-C-R-E-A-M-I-N-G," transferring one card from the face to the back as you spell each letter. Whatever card is now on the face of the packet will be turned and eliminated, showing the back. For example:

Screaming? Even if I can't hear it, that has to be much too loud.

Continue this procedure two more times, spelling exactly the same word or words that you spelled the first time, the spectator's choice. You'll spell this three times. As you spell, transfer cards from the face to the back. For the last step, you'll do this with only two cards. You will always be left with the "Applause" card at the finish. You turn it around to show the back.

I told you, one will be left at the end. You've probably figured out by now that I prefer applause, and now I hope that I'll be able to earn a little applause, at least in your imaginations.

14. The Enigma Process

With a simple, efficient "sort" calculation, and a wonderful, empowering "revelation" process, this word-divination routine works especially well through a virtual medium, where helpful cue-card notes can be secreted out of view of the camera.

You will need the three lists of words that appear on the following page. Each list contains twenty different words, and they have been arranged in alphabetical order. Some of the words appear on multiple lists. These must be enlarged, or re-typed with larger lettering so that they're easy to read. You will need to secretly signal to yourself a key number for each list, either "one," "two," or "four." You can do this with surreptitious marks near the margin or the back of the card. The illustrated lists here have bold numbers "1," "2," and "4," signaling these numbers.

You will also need the cue card handy, which will guide you through the revelations.

One of those old Greek philosophers said that the best psychic is the person who guesses well. And there's a lot of truth in that. Some people think they're psychic simply because they've made a few good guesses, and they have an inflated sense of their own importance.

But I've also known people who seem to be lucky all the time. They don't think of themselves as psychics. They just make good guesses. So, what's the difference? I actually think that, given the choice, I don't want to be psychic. I don't want the responsibility. But I'd like to be able to make fantastic guesses, and never really be wrong.

I'm going to try that right now, with you. You'll need a pencil or pen, and a piece of paper. I've brought a few lists of vocabulary words from an seventh-grade spelling test, some common words mixed with some poetic words. I'd like

you to select one of these lists. Go ahead and pick one of these three.

Here you ask a viewer to indicate one of the three lists which you hold in your hands. When one is selected, you hold it up to the spectator (the camera), and let him or her get a good look at all the words. The spectator is asked to make a mental selection of one word.

You can quickly identify the list that the spectator is using as "one," "two," or "four." Remember this number.

You're the most interesting part of this experiment. You provide all the random selections. So concentrate on your word. Don't worry about number. Don't give me any hints. Make sure it's a word that your recognize, and you can spell. Good. And before we move on, you'll need to remember that word. On your piece of paper, write down a number of lines, one line for each letter in the word. That will help you visualize the word later, when we fill in the letters, one-by-one. But don't show me how many lines you've drawn.

Perfect! Some of these words repeat from list to list. I want you to look at the other lists, too. Just look them over, and tell me if your word also appears on these lists. Without telling me the word you picked, is it on this list?...

And, now, look at this one, too ... Do you see your word?

If the spectator identifies his or her word on these additional two lists, add the corresponding numbers, "one," "two" or "four" to the list already selected. You may hear that the word appears on one list, two lists, or three lists; for a total, you may end up with a number from one to seven. This number will be your guide to the cue card for identifying the spectator's selection.

That's good, but you'll notice that those lists don't really narrow it down. The way that's usually done is by guessing. I hold my fingers up to my temples, like this.... And then I do my best to give the impression that I'm psychic. I make a bunch of guesses. I try to emphasize the correct guesses. And I try to have you forget about the wrong guesses.

1. COMPOSERS
2. COUNTRIES
3. EASTERN
4. ENIGMAS
5. GAMES
6. GREATNESS
7. IMAGES
8. MASTERING
9. NEGATERS
10. NEUROTIC
11. ORIENT
12. PROCESS
13. ROSES
14. ROUTINE
15. SCOOPERS
16. SCORES
17. SENATE
18. STEAMING
19. TEASE
20. TENOR

1. ANGER
2. COUNTED
3. DOCENT
4. EARTHLING
5. EASTERN
6. EDUCATION
7. ENIGMAS
8. GAMES
9. GARNET
10. GREATNESS
11. IMAGES
12. MASTERING
13. NEGATERS
14. NOTED
15. SENATE
16. STEAMING
17. TEASE
18. TEARING
19. TRIANGLE
20. UNCOATED

1. COASTER
2. COMPOSERS
3. COUNTED
4. CREST
5. DOCENT
6. EDUCATION
7. ENIGMAS
8. FACTORIES
9. FORECAST
10. GAMES
11. IMAGES
12. MASTERING
13. NOTED
14. PROCESS
15. ROSES
16. SCOOPERS
17. SCORES
18. SECTOR
19. STEAMING
20. UNCOATED

For example, I'm going to start by having you look over the blank spaces on the page in front of you. I'm going to guess that there's an "E" in your word. That's just a mathematical advantage. Lots of words have an "E." But if there is an "E," fill it in on the page. Right now, I'm just guessing there's one "E."

Now glance at the cue card on page 38 and follow the instructions for the corresponding number, one through seven. Compare this patter to the prompts on the cue card, and you'll understand the process. For example, if the number indicated by the addition is "5," your patter would proceed as follows:

I'm positive that there's an "E" in your word, so be sure that's filled in. I'm going to try to name off a few more letters. And you'll notice that I'm not going to get any of them wrong! That's my goal, anyway. One perfect, lucky guess after another. You'll get to decide if it's just luck.

So, after the first E... I want you to move your eyes back and forth along the lines, imagining the letters, as if they've already been drawn in. You'll notice that certain letters seem to flicker on and off, appearing and disappearing as you move your eyes back and forth. Concentrate with me. There's an "S." Isn't there? Wait. There are two "S's." Go ahead and fill those in. And there's an "O" and an "R." Write those down, too.

Hold on. I have to concentrate. That isn't all the letters, is it? Do you still have some that aren't filled in?

The spectator says, for example, that that's not the whole word.

I got that impression. The next letter is "C." How many more letters do you need?

The spectator says, for example, that the word is now one letter short.

The last letter is usually difficult. I think that it's ... "P." I got them all right, didn't I? Now, I wasn't keeping track of what I was saying, so let me try to imagine all of those letters, and how I should arrange them ... The word has to be ... "Process?" Hold up your piece of paper and let me see!

The cue card, on the following page, takes you through the letter-by-letter revelation. Each letter will

be correct, but after five letters, you will need to determine whether the word is done, or if there are still letters missing. (There may be an additional four letters missing, making up to a nine-letter word.)

The revelations of these letters, in order, will always give the correct, and complete, word. Each subsequent letter "closes in" on the correct word, so the spectator's information about the remaining letters becomes an important element of the solution.

CUE CARD FOR REVEALING LETTERS, "The Enigma Process"

1. E, T, R, O, N ... (tenor) ... I? ... (orient) ... U? ... (routine) ... C? ... (neurotic) ... S (countries)
2. E, G, R, A, N ... (anger) ... T? ... (garnet) ... I? ... (tearing) ... L? ... (triangle) ... H (earthling)
3. E, E, S, A, T ... (tease) ... N? ... (senate) ... R? ... (eastern) ... G? ... (negaters) ... S (greatness)
4. E, R, S, T, C ... (crest) ...O? ... (sector) ... A? ... (coaster) ... F? ... (forecast) ... I (factories)
5. E, S, S, O, R ... (roses) ... C? ... (scores) ... P? ... (process) ... O? ... (scoopers) ... M (composers)
6. E, N, D, O, T ... (noted) ... C? ... (docent) ... U? ... (counted) ... A? ... (uncoated) ... I (education)
7. E, M, G, A, S ... (games) ... I? ... (images) ... N? ... (enigmas) ... T? ... (steaming) ... R (mastering)